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Mr. Henry Marsh. As to the printing from the engraving, something very different should be said; the vagueness in the last of the illustrations, the mistiness in the face and figure of the rising fairy, and the uncertainty in the water, is due to the fact that the engravings were printed on unsuitable paper. The same cause has injured them all, with great unfairness to both artist and engraver, and much to the detriment of what would otherwise have been the best illustrated book that had ever appeared in this country. As it is, the book is still valuable and interesting; but it is only to be regretted that it should have been allowed to come so near being better and then so nearly spoiled. The printing is neatly and carefully done. The iron-work tracery of the cover strikes us as in singularly bad taste, for it is much more appropriate to the chill graveyard fence than to the Christmas gift-book; nor do we set any store by the "ornamental designs" and vignette.

10. — *Oriental Religions and their Relation to Universal Religion. India.* By SAMUEL JOHNSON. Boston: James R. Osgood & Co. 1872.

ONE of the last discovered of the sciences, that of linguistics, brings for a reward to its students a wider view of the early history of man, and of the most interesting side of man, than does any other of the sciences. Whether all geologists would agree to this statement is perhaps uncertain, but at any rate one cannot be too grateful for the opportunity the study of linguistics has given us to trace the growth of the religious nature of man from remote periods down to the present day. The students of Sanskrit find that for their very text-books they must use the theological treatises and the hymnals of the language as the storehouse of verbs and constructions which go so far towards explaining the old puzzles of Greek and Latin grammar. We find a complete collection of religious books, running back to an uncertain antiquity before the Christian era, and an almost unbroken series down to the present time. We have the very prayers of our early forefathers, the expression of the same wonder which animates their descendants, — a full record of the religious feeling of one race of men. But the reading of this record is where students differ. It is no easy task to put ourselves into the mind of our next-door neighbor, to see the world as he does, to satisfy ourselves with his solutions, and there is always danger of our reading more into the memorials of the past, — a past which it is so difficult for us to comprehend, — than was ever intended by those who composed them.

This is a fault from which Mr. Johnson cannot be said to be wholly

free. His book is written to represent the religions of India, Brahmanism and Buddhism, as well as the earlier Aryan religion, as divisions of a universal religion of which Christianity is one part as well as any other. That the proper way of discussing this question, like all others, is one of freedom from bias, of course, needs no discussion. To begin comparing any other religion with Christianity, with the assumption of the self-evidence of the inferiority of the uninspired religion to that which we claim to be inspired, is a sort of discussion that every one would readily condemn if it were done, *mutatis mutandis*, by ignorant pagans; but there is the same objection to starting with any hypothesis, especially when the facts treated are still so unsettled. Mr. Johnson seeks impartiality with rare earnestness, but it seems to us that the world stands much more in need of exact information about the true nature of these early religions, than of a comparison between them and others, with the result, more or less wide-spread, of magnifying their merits and diminishing their faults. Not that it should be thought that Mr. Johnson has sacrificed facts to the expression of his views; on the contrary, he has collected a very great number of interesting details from very many authorities. These authorities, however, are not of equal repute. Pictet, for instance, is a man whose statements should be accepted only with the utmost caution. He cared much more for an entertaining and apparently complete expression of his opinions than for rigid, irrefutable accuracy. It is much to the credit, be it said by the way, of the original workers in this field, that a scholar who, like Mr. Johnson, works at second-hand, should find so much material which he can employ, and that there should be so little that cannot be used with safety. There has been a great deal of wild writing when attempts have been made to theorize about the facts, but the collections of facts have been made with great zeal and care.

While we would warmly recommend Mr. Johnson's book as bearing evidence of generally careful compilation and of much original thought, there are certain points which we think well deserve discussion. We doubt the accuracy of Mr. Johnson's estimate of the Aryas; not that we should care to have them drawn as howling savages, but one finds it hard to believe that they were such lofty choppers of logic and masters of philosophy as the author represents them. If so, the human race has sadly degenerated. If these simple hewers of wood and drawers of water "distinguished clearly the principle of spiritual existence," there is indeed truth in the poets' dreams of a golden age. Mr. Johnson refers to the theory of "solar myths," saying that they were "more or less intimately related to natural phenomena, though proceeding primarily from moral and spiritual experiences in their

makers,"—a vague sentence, the meaning of which it is by no means easy to catch. Here it seems to us that the author puts into the early Aryan mind the experience and light of the present day in regard of physical and, perhaps, spiritual phenomena. His Aryan is a nineteenth-century Aryan, who has read the Bible, the history of the Church, his Voltaire, and his Strauss, as well as the latest scientific books, and forms a fine-drawn theology which shall not strongly offend any of his instructors. Not that we would deny the strong religious yearning of the Vedic hymns, but we would incline to deny the existence, at that early time, of a philosophy which is so nearly one of satiety. Of great value is the author's account of Brahminism; he here, as everywhere, has carefully studied his subject, has accumulated much material from very arid sources, and for his care and appreciation he deserves great praise. To many the impression will occur that he overpraises the Hindu religion, that he regards the race with too lenient eyes, that in his zeal to do it justice he is blind to many of the faults of its systems; but we are all ready to forgive much to an author who is enthusiastic in his work.

He treats well of Buddhism; we cannot, however, agree with him in supporting Bunsen's interpretation of *nirvāna* as meaning "inward peace"; it seems more likely that, if the Buddhists had intended to give it that meaning, they would have done so, there is no reason for their not doing it, it would have been perfectly simple; whereas, on the other hand, half of the trouble about defining *nirvāna* might come from its very obscurity, from a vain attempt to separate it from annihilation. To the mind of the Buddhist, believing that all was bad, annihilation would have been the only sure relief from perpetual misery. Existence was subject to pain and sorrow; to escape from existence was his only aim, and that escape annihilation could bring him. That then, as now, the physical dread of dying was mistaken for horror of annihilation is probably true; and may it not have been to get around the one, while securing the other, that the real meaning was left purposely obscure? This we would suggest with all timidity.

As we have said, we recommend this book as perhaps invaluable for all who cannot of themselves make a thorough study of the original authorities; it should be read by those who care to see how general are those feelings, how universal are the forms of their expression at all times and in all places. The Hindu mind, with its hair-splitting subtlety, its apathetic intellectual seriousness, its unpractical logic, will always be a puzzle to us of the European branch; but it will always be an interesting study, and for this Mr. Johnson's book will be found an admirable aid.